

May 25, 2010

The Life of Gerald Lehman

- The funeral for Gerald (Jerry) Lehman of Groton will be Thursday, May 27, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Groton, SD. The Rev. Larry Lundstrom will officiate. Burial with military honors will be at the James Cemetery.
- Visitation will be at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel on Wednesday, May 26, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7 p.m.
- Jerry died at his home at the age of 65 on May 21, 2010



after a two and one half year battle with cancer.

- Gerald Eugene Lehman was born on January 5, 1945 in Aberdeen to Reuben E. and LaVerna I. (Wilke) Lehman. He attended school in Groton, graduating in 1963. After graduation he attended ND State College of Science in Wahpeton, ND. He was drafted into the Army in 1965; serving 1965-1967 with one tour of duty in Viet Nam as a helicopter crew chief.
- Following his honorable discharge from the military he was united in marriage to Linda (Graf) Stephens in December of 1967. To this union a son, Chad, was born and Jerry adopted a daughter, Jennifer (Jenny).
- On October 21, 1975 he married Janet (Ball) Dirksen and added two more children to the family, Janelle Dirksen and Ward Dirksen.
- Jerry and Janet farmed northwest of Groton growing wheat, corn and soybeans plus feeding cattle. He enjoyed tractor pulling for many years at fairs and celebrations in the area winning many trophies. As a member of the Groton Jaycees he helped start the first tractor pulling contest in Groton and the first one at the Brown County Fair.
- Jerry was a past Sunday school teacher and past 4-H leader with his children being very involved in 4-H. The family enjoyed many outings with each member driving their own snowmobile. He served on the Brown County Fair Board and was President of the South Dakota Association of Fairs & Celebrations being inducted into their Fairman's Hall of Fame in 1993.
- In addition to farming Jerry and Janet also owned and operated the Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream Store in Aberdeen for 19 years. They traveled to many fairs,

festivals, city celebrations and farm shows with their ice cream through the years.

- He also helped with many State Youth Talent Contest finals which were sponsored by the South Dakota Association of Fairs & Celebrations as their stage manager.
- Jerry was a motorcycle enthusiast and belonged to the Freedom Riders Motorcycle Club. He and Janet took many trips on their motorcycles to Washington, DC, Milwaukee, WI, Colorado and of course to Sturgis for many rallies.
- Jerry retired from farming in January 2007 and was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer in November 2007.
- Celebrating his life through memories are his wife, Janet; his children, Chad (Nacole) Lehman of Groton; Ward Dirksen of Silver Spring, Maryland; Janelle (Clay) Wilwert of Dubuque, Iowa and Jenny Aslesen of Watertown; nine grandchildren, Dillon Lehman, Jerica Lehman, Connor Lehman, Brandon (Kristen) Dirksen, Jeremy Bickett, Chad (Carrie) Wilwert, Alex (Jon) Kahnke, Brittany Welk, and Christopher Aslesen. Jerry is survived by his three great-grandchildren, Mia Dirksen, Grace Kahnke, Logan Kahnke and his sister, Judith (Lennis) Larson of Spearfish and cousins. He is also survived by mother-in-law, Lila (Ball) Olson, Groton and sisters-in-law, Barbara (Ball) (Steinhoff) Hoefler, Pueblo, CO and Ranae Ball, Conde. Missing him are his dog, Lizzy, and cat, Angel.
- Preceding him in death were his parents, Reuben & LaVerna Lehman; uncle, Henry (Dorothy) Lehman, aunts, Erna (Bert) Hoen and Ruth (Orville) Larsen; father-in-law, Henry Ball; sister-in-law, Loretta (Ball) Avery; brothers-in-law, Earl Steinhoff and Roger Ball and step-father-in-law, Maurice Olson.
- Casketbearers will be all of Jerry's grandchildren.
- In lieu of flowers memorials may be directed to Disabled American Veterans, PO Box 5046, Sioux Falls, SD 57117 or Hospice Foundation - 305 S. State Street - Aberdeen, SD 57401.